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BOOK REVIEWS.

OUTLINES OF A CRITICAL THEORY OF ETHICS. By *John Dewey*. Ann Arbor : Register Publishing Company. 1891.

The title of this very thoughtful book expresses well the author's method of comparing opposite one-sided views with the aim of discovering a more adequate theory. In carrying out this aim not only is an analysis given of the main elements of the theory of ethics, but the main methods and problems of contemporary ethics are considered also. Professor Dewey rejects both Hedonism and Kantism. He rejects Hedonism because pleasure fails as a standard of ethics, and he rejects Kantism because it is a barren abstraction. Kant's "ought" does not root in and does not flower from the "is." Professor Dewey says :

"Hedonism finds the end of conduct, or the desirable, wholly determined by "the various particular desires which a man happens to have; Kantianism holds "that to discover the end of conduct, we must wholly exclude the desires. Hedonism "holds that the rightness of conduct is determined wholly by its consequences; "Kantianism holds that the consequences have nothing to do with the rightness of "an act, but that it is decided wholly by the motive of the act. From this contrast "we may anticipate both our criticism of the Kantian theory and our conception of "the true end of action. The fundamental error of Hedonism and Kantianism is "the same—the supposition that desires are for pleasure only. Let it be recognised "that desires are for objects conceived as satisfying or developing the self, and that "pleasure is incidental to this fulfilment of capacities of self, and we have the "means of escaping the one-sidedness of Kantianism as well as of Hedonism. We "can see that the end is neither the procuring of particular pleasures through the "various desires, nor action from the mere idea of abstract law in general, but that "it is the satisfaction of desires according to law" (pp. 82-83)

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to the writings of the late Professor Green and others for the "backbone" of his theory, which he states to be "the conception of the will as the expression of ideas, and of social ideas; the notion of an objective ethical world realised in institutions which afford moral ideals, theatre and impetus to the individual; the notion of the moral life as growth in freedom, as the individual finds and conforms to the law of his social placing." Among the

specific forms which the author calls particular attention to, as giving "a flesh and blood of its own" to that backbone, are the idea of desire as the ideal activity in contrast with actual possession; the analysis of individuality into function including capacity and environment, and the statement of an ethical postulate.

This postulate may be regarded as summing up the ethical theory as presented by Professor Dewey. It is thus expressed: In the realisation of individuality there is found also the needed realization of some community of persons of which the individual is a member; and, conversely, the agent who duly satisfies the community in which he shares, by that same conduct satisfies himself. We have here postulated a community of persons, and a good which realised by the will of one is made public. In "this unity of individuals as respects the end of action, this existence of a practical common good," we have what is called "the moral order of the world." This view would seem to satisfy the requirements of both Individualism and Socialism, but is it consistent with the law of progress elsewhere insisted on by the author? He affirms, as against the Hedonism of Spencer, that moral ideals are always developing. Progress is itself the ideal, since "permanence of *specific* ideals means moral death." But this progress must originate with the individual, who by the formation of the new ideal ceases to be in perfect accord with the community, and will continue to be in disaccord with it until the community has accepted his ideal. A perfect realisation of individuality in the community would be the "fixed millennium" which the author properly objects to, and to escape which it is necessary, that the equilibration towards which the individual, as well as the social, organism is ever tending shall never be actually attained. Its attainment would mean stagnation and death.

We have not space to say more of Professor Dewey's book than that it is a very thoughtful work, most so in its critical parts, and will form an excellent help for the student of ethics

Ω.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY. By *John S. Mackenzie*. New York: Macmillan & Co. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co. 1890.

We have here, in an enlarged form, the substance of the Shaw Lectures delivered by the author, at the University of Edinburg, in January, 1889. The work is professedly, not a systematic treatise on the subject dealt with, but only a slight contribution to the discussion of it; and it is said to be "not so much a book as an indication of the lines on which a book might be written." The force of these apparently deprecatory remarks depends entirely on the result attained. If an introductory study is based on true principles it may be of more general value than an elaborate work, because it will probably present the conclusions of the latter in a simpler and less technical form. This presupposes, however, a knowledge of previous inquiry, and, therefore, the use of the term "Introduction" is somewhat of a misnomer. Mr. Mackenzie remarks, indeed, that his inquiry may be thought to belong to the end rather than to the beginning of philosophic study.